

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 COA-01 DLOS-03

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5712

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 0627

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SENV, EWWT, CA

SUBJECT: PROPOSED EASTPORT REFINERY AND CANADIAN SHIPPING REGULATIONS

REF: BROWN-LEARY TELECONS FEB 21

1. TCO HAS DISCUSSED PRESS REPORTS OF POSSIBLE NEW CANADIAN REGULATION PROHIBITING LARGE SHIPS FROM USING NARROW CANADIAN WATERS WITH O'NEIL (DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, MARINE TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT). O'NEIL IS GENERALLY FORTH-COMING WITH RESPECT TO MATTERS FOR WHICH HE IS RESPONSIBLE, BUT IN THIS INSTANCE HE WAS VERY CAUTIOUS. HE DESCRIBED SUN ARTICLE AS SPECULATIVE AND WOULD ONLY INDICATE THAT THE GOC HAS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE EASTPORT PROBLEM AND CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF A REGULATION. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS THE GOC'S PRESENT INTENTION TO INFORM THE USG OF ITS PLANS BEFORE MAKING REGULATION PUBLIC. (COMMENT: IN A CASUAL CONVERSATION WITH MARINE ADMINISTRATOR ROY ILLING THREE WEEKS AGO TCO ASKED WHETHER FROM VIEW POINT OF SAFETY OF NAVIGATION THERE WAS ANY REAL PROBLEM IN LARGE VESSELS TRANSITING THESE WATERS EN ROUTE TO EASTPORT. ILLING SUGGESTED
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THAT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HIS AGENCY -- WHICH

HAS RESPONSIBILITIES SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE U.S.
COAST GUARD -- THERE WAS NO PARTICULAR PROBLEM.)

2. SUBSEQUENTLY ECON COUNSELOR RAISED MATTER WITH
SHORTLIFFE (DIRECTOR, USA DIVISION, EXTAFF). SHORTLIFFE
SAID EXTAFF HAS ALSO RECEIVED INQUIRIES REGARDING
U.S. PRESS ARTICLES AND IS ISSUING FOLLOWING
STATEMENT: QUOTE: THE PROJECT OF THE PITTSO
COMPANY TO BUILD A REFINERY AT EASPORT MAINE AND BRING
OIL BY TANKER TO EASPORT THROUGH THE CANADIAN WATERS
OF HEAD HARBOR PASSAGE IS UNDER REVIEW BY THE MAINE
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BOARD. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
AND THE MAINE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BOARD ARE
WELL AWARE OF CANADA'S OPPOSITION TO THE PROJECT.
ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS
MADE CLEAR THAT IT CONSIDERS THE PROSPECT OF SUPER
TANKER TRAFFIC THROUGH HEAD HARBOR PASSAGE TO BE AN
UNACCEPTABLE ENVIRONMENTAL RISK. SPECIFICALLY ON
JUNE 7, 1973 AND ON AUGUST 16, 1974 THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT WAS INFORMED BY DIPLOMATIC NOTES OF
THE CANADIAN POSITION. AS YET NO DECISION HAS BEEN
MADE BY THE MAINE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BOARD.
WE DO NOT INTEND TO COMMENT FURTHER IN THE ABSENCE
OF A DECISION BY THE BOARD TO APPROVE THE PITTSO
APPLICATION. UNQUOTE.

3. WHEN ECON COUNSELOR POINTED OUT THAT "NO COMMENT"
DID NOT NECESSARILY MEAN "NO ACTION" AND PRESSED
SHORTLIFFE RE ISSUANCE OF NEW REGULATION, SHORTLIFFE
SAID USG COULD ASSUME NOT ONLY DOES GOC NOT INTEND
TO COMMENT, IT "INTENDS TO DO NOTHING" UNTIL MAINE
BOARD ACTS.
PORTER

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